

Jason Freeman

Piano Etudes

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-Share Alike 3.0 United States License.

To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/us/>
or send a letter to Creative Commons, 171 Second Street, Suite 300, San Francisco, California, 94105, USA.

Program Note:

Inspired by the tradition of open-form musical scores, I composed these etudes as a collection of short musical fragments with links to connect them. In performance, the pianist must use those links to jump from fragment to fragment, creating her own unique version of the composition.

The pianist, though, should not have all the fun. So I also created a web site (<http://www.jasonfreeman.net/pianoetudes/>) where you can create your own version of each etude, download it as an audio file or a printable score, and share it with others. In concert, pianists may make up their own version of each etude, or they may select a version created by a web visitor.

The title of each etude hints at its origin. While writing “Observing Squirrels,” I faced some writer’s block and often stared out the window of my home office, marveling at the acrobatic agility and acorn-munching expertise of the dozens of squirrels outside. The pitch material for “Learning to Dance” is loosely drawn from the music for the first dance at my wedding. “Reading a Poem” expands upon a musical passage I originally wrote for a setting of a poem by Mark Strand. And “Trying to Be Hip” began with a cheesy techno bass line I used to demonstrate sequencing software in my computer music class.

I wrote *Piano Etudes* for Jenny Lin; our collaboration was supported, in part, with a Special Award from the Yvar Mikhashoff Pianist/Composer Commissioning Project. Special thanks to Turbulence for hosting the web site and including it in their spotlight series and to the American Composers Forum’s Encore Program for supporting several live performances of this work. I developed the web site in collaboration with Akito Van Troyer. *Piano Etudes* is dedicated to my wife, Leah Epstein.

Duration:

The duration of each etude is at the discretion of the performer, so the duration of each performance will vary dramatically.

Performance Options:

There are three ways in which to perform each etude:

1. Use this score. Make navigation decisions during the performance.
2. Visit the web site (<http://www.jasonfreeman.net/pianoetudes/>). Create your own version, print it out, and practice it. Do not make navigation decisions during the performance.
3. Visit the web site's gallery section. Select a version created and shared by someone else, print it out, and practice it. Do not make navigation decisions during the performance.

All four etudes may be performed together, or each one may be performed as a separate work.

No technology is required during the live performance. I do encourage you, though, to let your audience know about the work's web site in promotional materials for your concert and in the concert program.

General Performance Notes:

Since I composed the musical fragments without knowing the order in which they would be performed, please treat the notation as a starting point, not as a strict document. Use your musical intuition with regard to dynamics, pedaling, phrasing, tempo, and other expressive elements. Feel free to add expressive markings not present in the score. You may even ignore or contradict existing markings in order to convey a musical gesture or to give the music more momentum. I especially encourage you to experiment with larger-scale gestures that span across many fragments and repetitions. Ultimately, the large-scale structure of each etude is completely up to you.

If you have questions about how to navigate an etude, try out the web site for clarification. And please contact me via my web site (<http://www.jasonfreeman.net/contact/>) with any questions. If you perform the piece, please also drop me a note. And have fun!

Jason Freeman, Atlanta, November 15, 2008

Jason Freeman

Piano Etudes

I. Observing Squirrels

\bullet = c. 104

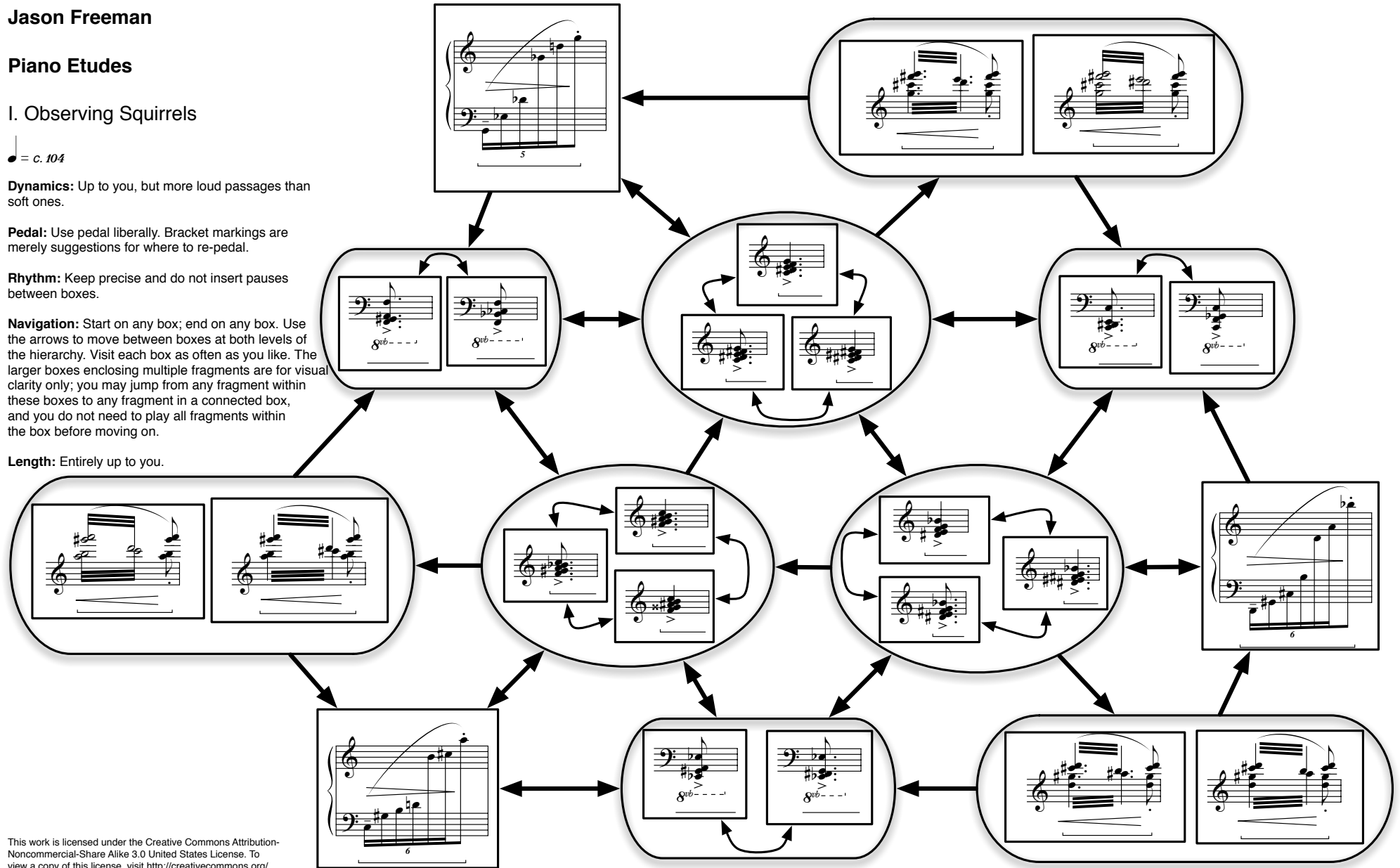
Dynamics: Up to you, but more loud passages than soft ones.

Pedal: Use pedal liberally. Bracket markings are merely suggestions for where to re-pedal.

Rhythm: Keep precise and do not insert pauses between boxes.

Navigation: Start on any box; end on any box. Use the arrows to move between boxes at both levels of the hierarchy. Visit each box as often as you like. The larger boxes enclosing multiple fragments are for visual clarity only; you may jump from any fragment within these boxes to any fragment in a connected box, and you do not need to play all fragments within the box before moving on.

Length: Entirely up to you.



Jason Freeman

Piano Etudes

II. Learning to Dance

♩ = c. 176

Dynamics: Up to you, but more loud passages than soft ones.

Pedal: Use liberally at your discretion, but always change pedal when moving to a new box on either page.

Navigation: On each page, start on any box and end on any box. Use the arrows to move among boxes. Visit each box as often as you like. The larger boxes enclosing multiple fragments are for visual clarity only; you may jump from any fragment within these boxes to any fragment in a connected box, and you do not need to play all fragments within the box before moving on.

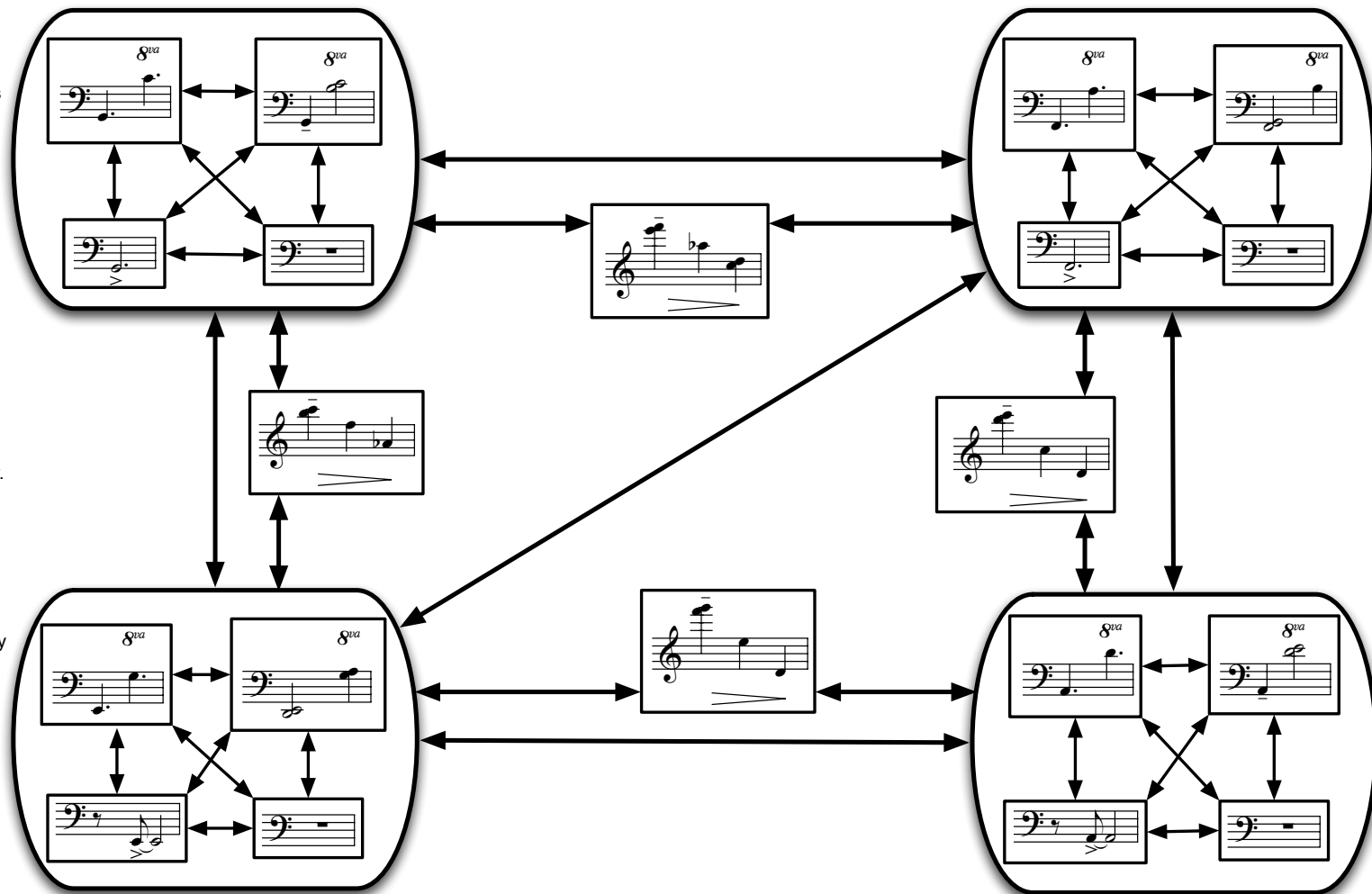
Synchronization: Each page represents a layer of music. Play both pages simultaneously. Tempo and meter are synchronized between the two pages (i.e. measures on both pages always start together). You need not move to new boxes at the same time on both pages.

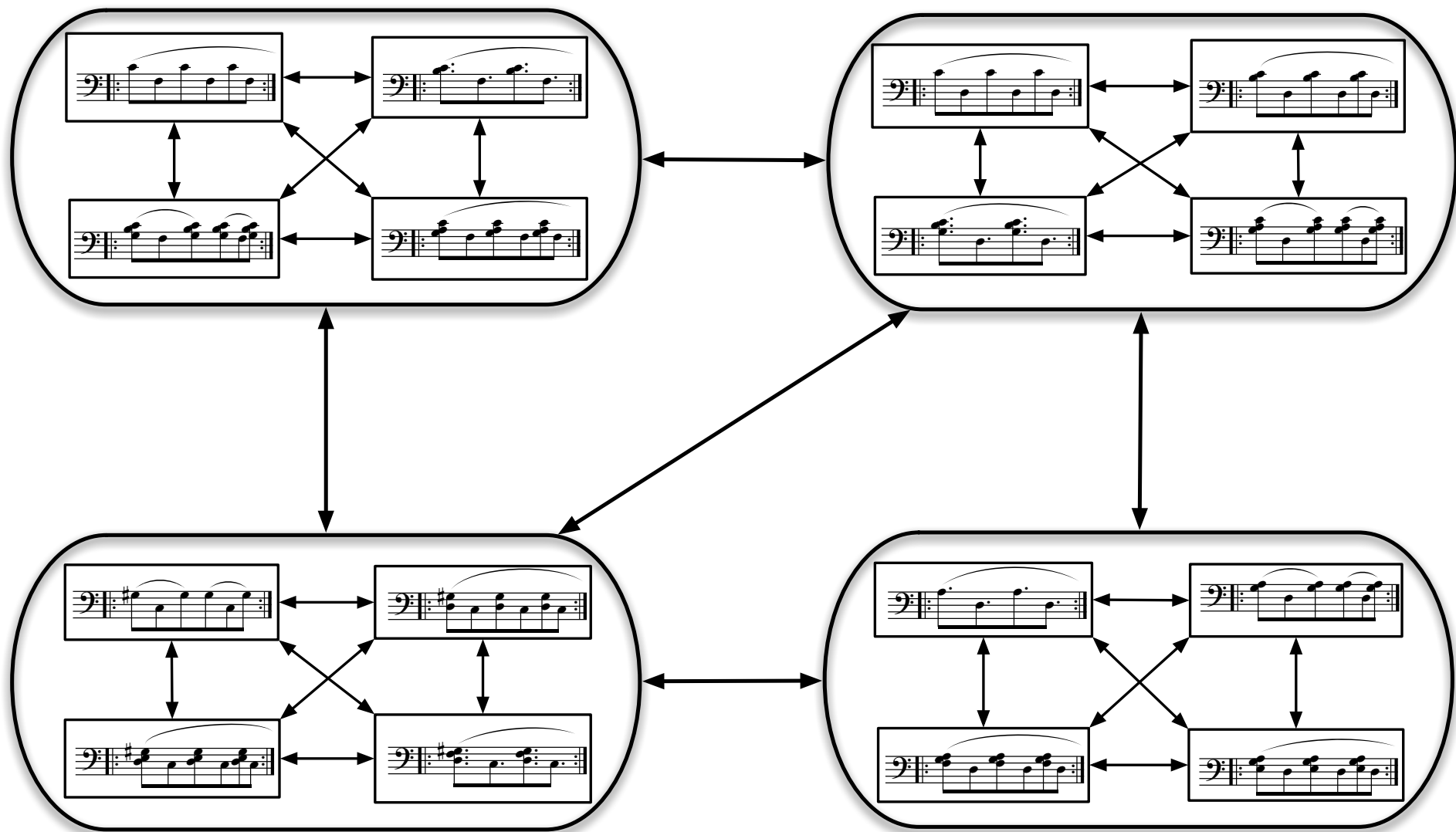
Repeats: Boxes on the opposite page may be repeated as many times as you wish before moving to another box. Boxes on this page may only be played once before moving to another box, but you may alternate back and forth between two boxes many times in a row if you wish.

Other notes: Keep a strict meter throughout, with little rubato.

Length: Entirely up to you.

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-Share Alike 3.0 United States License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/us/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, 171 Second Street, Suite 300, San Francisco, California, 94105, USA.





Jason Freeman

Piano Etudes

III. Reading a Poem

$\text{♩} = c. 48$

Dynamics: Up to you, but more soft passages than loud ones.

Pedal: Re-pedal each new chord (this page) but leave down through repeated notes (opposite page). *Una corda* at your discretion.

Navigation: On each page, start on any box and end on any box. Use the arrows to move among boxes. Visit each box as often as you like.

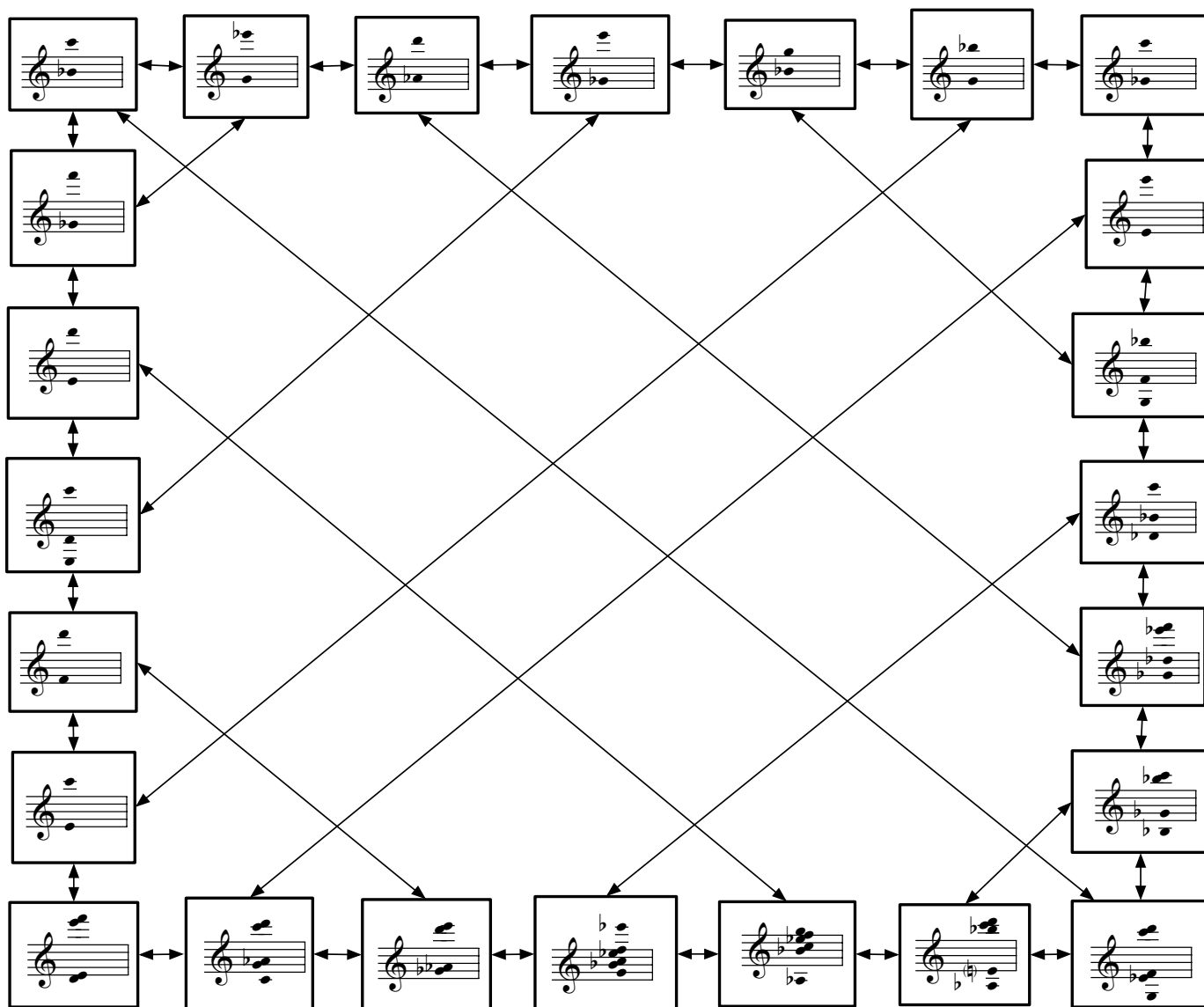
Synchronization: Each page represents a layer of music. Play both pages simultaneously. Chords on this page need not be attacked synchronously with notes or measures on the opposite page. You need not move to new boxes at the same time on both pages (and will probably rarely do so).

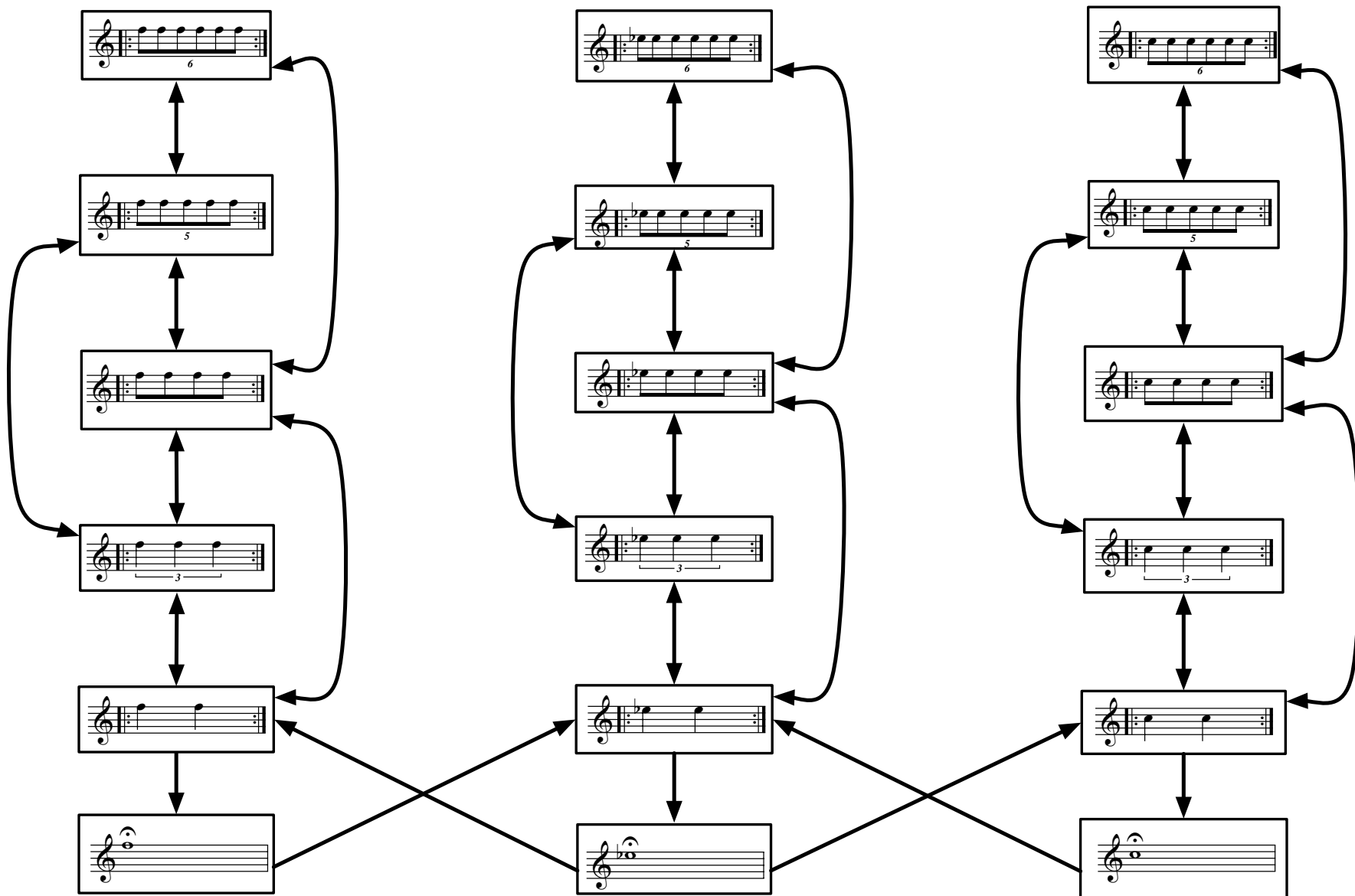
Repeats: Boxes on the opposite page may be repeated as many times as you wish before moving to another box. Boxes on this page may only be played once before moving to another box, but you may alternate back and forth between two boxes many times in a row if you wish.

Other notes: Legato and rubato throughout. The music should not feel strongly metrical; do not emphasize notes simply because they come at the beginning of a notated measure. You may place as much space between successive chords on this page as you wish. Fermatas on the opposite page may last a considerable time.

Length: Entirely up to you.


This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-Share Alike 3.0 United States License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/us/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, 171 Second Street, Suite 300, San Francisco, California, 94105, USA.





Piano Etudes

IV. Trying to Be Hip

 = *c. 104*

Dynamics: Up to you, but more loud passages than soft ones.

Pedal: At your discretion. Do not be afraid to let notes ring beyond their written duration to build up a bit of a sonic mush.

Navigation: Start on any box and end on any box. Use the arrows to move among boxes. Visit each box as often as you like.

Repeats: Boxes may be repeated as many times as you wish before moving to another box.

Other notes: Keep a strict meter throughout, with little rubato.

Length: Entirely up to you.

